



TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMMISSION

CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

TO: Transportation Safety Commission Members, Council members, City Manager Kurt Hodgen, Assistant City Manager Evan Vass

FROM: Thanh H. Dang, Public Works Planner

DATE: June 9, 2009

RE: Transportation Safety Commission Minutes for June 4, 2009

The Transportation Safety Commission met on Thursday June 4, 2009, 9AM, at the Department of Public Transportation, 475 E Washington St.

Members and Advisory Members present included: Bill Blessing (chairman), Len Van Wyk (citizen), Ben Wyse (citizen), Lee Eschelman (JMU), Officer Greg Deeds (Police), Thanh Dang (Public Works), Aaron Smith-Walter (Public Transportation), Doug Stader (DMV)

Guests present: Brad Reed (Public Works), Shawn Adams (Public Works)

Citizens are always provided the opportunity to voice their views/concerns about any item before the commission. It is the policy of the Commission to move the agenda item to the beginning of the meeting when citizens attend Commission meetings to avoid detaining citizens for the entire meeting. However, any citizen is welcome to stay for the entire meeting.

Welcome

1. Special Presentation: Public Works, Traffic Engineering – Intersection Reconfigurations

Mr. Reed presented the work that the Traffic Demand Management Program has done with respect to signalized intersections in the city.

Changes have been implemented on Burgess Road at the entrance into Harrisonburg Crossing. The rightmost westbound lane on Burgess Road is now exclusively a right turn movement into the shopping center. This eliminates the issue of the large number of vehicles turning right who are stopped by a

single vehicle going straight in the rightmost lane. It was found that the majority of traffic traveling westbound on Burgess Road was turning into the shopping center.

Lane pattern changes (via line painting) will be forthcoming to the area of Linda Lane between E Market St and the first Lowe's entrance to facilitate left turn movements into the Lowe's entrance and enhance traffic flow on Linda Lane and reduce conflicts with left turning vehicles into the Lowe's entrance.

Left turn lanes will be added on Vine Street (via line painting) to facilitate through movements on Vine St. Mr. Wyse inquired if there would be adequate turning radius/space for buses to make turns at this intersection. Mr. Reed responded that the left stop bars will be recessed back to ensure adequate space. Mr. Van Wyk mentioned that the addition of a left lane and narrowing of the street width in this area and other areas comes at a cost to bicyclist safety and comfort.

Old Business

There were no old business items to be discussed.

New Business

2. Discussion – Vision and Goals of Transportation Safety Commission

This discussion was postponed until next meeting due to new agenda items.

3. Discussion – How to handle Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program requests and available alternatives.

This discussion was postponed until next meeting due to new agenda items.

4. Vine Street, Trucks

At the request of City Manager Kurt Hodgen, the Commission was asked to review Rev. Eugene Buie's concerns with traffic on Vine St. The Commission supports/seconds City Manager Hodgen's response letter (dated June 2, 2009) to Rev. Buie.

5. South High (Rt 42) & Grace Streets

Officer Deeds presented a letter from James and Connie Lehman, 1180 Shenandoah St, which describes an accident that occurred on March 5, 2009 at the intersection of South High and Grace Streets. Their friend Dr. Pedro Aponte was struck by a car as he walked across S High St while the pedestrian "WALK" signal was flashing. *See attached letters and police reports for more details.*

The Commission reviewed the police crash report. Casual factors include that the sun was in the eyes of the driver at 7:30am. Mr. Eschelmann said he has been observing the intersection and suggested that an

“exclusive pedestrian phase” (similar to Main & Grace and Main & Bluestone). There was discussion that an exclusive pedestrian phase would “detrimentally impact” the coordinated flow of traffic along High St. A second suggestion was to consider split phasing the traffic traveling on Grace St so that there would be fewer points of conflict between pedestrians crossing the crosswalk and motor vehicles turning onto S High St. There was also discussion of moving the crosswalk from the northside of the intersection to the southside of the intersection, because the southside is shorter.

The Commission asked that Public Works’ Traffic Engineering run a simulation of both the exclusive pedestrian phase and split phased intersection and present their findings at next month’s meeting.

6. Sight Distance Issues

Mr. Blessing asked that Public Works review the intersection of Blue Ridge Drive and Old Furnace Road for an overgrown bush.

Mr. Blessing asked that Public Works review the intersection of Ott St & Franklin St. In southbound direction there is a tree obscuring the stop sign.

Mr. Smith-Walter asked that Public Works follow up on the intersection of Breckenridge & Stonewall, where an evergreen tree is blocking the sight distance of bus drivers.

Mr. Wyse asked that Public Works review the intersection of Central Ave & Pleasant Hill Rd. When school buses turn from Central to Pleasant Hill, their sight distance is being blocked by a big blue dumpster.

Mr. Wyse asked that Public Works review the intersection of Central Ave & South Ave, noting that vegetation is a problem for sight distance on all sides, particularly at northeast corner (pine trees).

7. Speed Limits

Mr. Van Wyk stated that city roads have been built wide, with low (25 mph) speed limits, which encourages “speeding” above the posted speed limit. Examples he noted include: Central Ave, Dogwood Ave, Linda Lane, and South Main St. He stated that it is a safety problem and noting that the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program can help address some of these areas, but not all. Mr. Van Wyk recognized that residents working with city staff through the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program were able to reduce speeds along Central Ave with painted white lines.

Ms. Dang noted that South Main St between Port Republic Rd and Grattan St is currently under design, and concept under review by JMU and the City for a new landscaped median, which should visually make the street narrow and slow traffic.

Mr. Williams noted that Linda Lane was constructed wide in anticipation of future planned development in the area, namely the adjacent Quarry. Additionally, a planting plan had been developed and a bid was released for proposals to plant trees and vegetation along the corridor by Fall 2009.

8. Crossing Guard

Mr. Wyse noted that, although it was generally not a problem, there were several occasions when he saw that the school crossing guard at Central and South Ave was not assisting students to cross the street. Officer Deeds will relay this concern to Sgt Keller and Kathleen Burkett of the Police Department.

Other Business/Announcements

Mr. Williams described the Traffic Signal Inspection Program that started this year as a result of a failed signal pole last year at the intersection of E Market St & Mason St. As a result of this year's inspection program, a crack in the signal pole at Port Republic Rd and the southbound interstate ramp was found and will be replaced.

Mr. Stader gave updates on the click-or-ticket enforcement period and statewide accident and fatality data.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, July 2, 2009, 9AM, at the Department of Planning & Community Development, 409 S Main Street.

Adjourned



City of Harrisonburg, Virginia

Office of the City Manager

345 South Main Street
Post Office Box 20031
Harrisonburg, VA 22802
(540) 432-7701 / FAX (540) 432-7778

Kurt D. Hodgen
City Manager

June 2, 2009

Rev. Dr. Eugene C. Buie, Jr.
790 Vine Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22802

RE: Vine Street

Dear Rev. Buie:

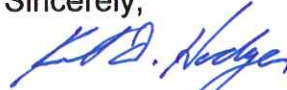
I am in receipt of your letter dated May 30, 2009 concerning the referenced item and the follow-up letter you received from Transportation Safety Commission Chairman Bill Blessing. In responding to your most recent letter, I would first say that I take exception to your comment that to date the city has not treated you as "citizens worthy of respect". The fact that we have not responded to the issues you have presented with the answer you desire does not constitute treating you disrespectfully. Neither my letter to you of April 17 nor Mr. Blessing's summary of the discussions of the Transportation Safety Commission were intended to do anything but convey pertinent information to you.

Responding again to your specific requests, I offer the following:

- Vine Street/Mt Clinton Pike was built with the intent of City Council that it be a truck route. I have forwarded your prior correspondence and my replies to you to Council members and they have not indicated any desire to change the route.
- The existing time restrictions for through trucks utilizing Vine Street/ Mt. Clinton Pike were also approved by City Council and there is no indication of a desire to change those times.
- There are currently 25 mph speed limit signs posted in both directions within sight distance of your property, so I see no need for change in that regard. I will ask that the police department conduct some targeted speed limit enforcement in that area.
- A caution sign of the type you request is not typically installed by the City and would require endorsement of the Transportation Safety Commission as a starting point. I would note that in Mr. Blessing's letter to you, from the Commission's perspective, the hidden driveway issue can be improved by landscaping adjustments. There was no recommendation concerning additional signage.

If you have any other questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Kurt D. Hodgen
City Manager

Cc: Harrisonburg City Council
Harrisonburg Transportation Safety Commission
James Baker, Director of Public Works

RECEIVED

JUN 02 2009

OFFICE OF
CITY MANAGER

Rev. Dr. Eugene C. Buie, Jr.
790 Vine Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22802

May 30, 2009

Mr. Kurt Hodgen, City Manager
City of Harrisonburg
345 South Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Dear Mr. Hodgen:

As you suggested, I wrote to Mr. William Blessing and the Transportation Safety Commission. In my letter of April 21, 2009, I tried to express our concerns and make suggestions that seemed worthy of a reasonable response. I tried to make our case in a polite and considerate manner. In response, we received a letter from Mr. Blessing dated May 14, 2009, reducing our concerns to basically nothing worth the city's consideration and addressing us as if we were mentally incapable of understanding the situation.

We are aware that the issue of large trucks disturbing the peace is not a safety matter. You are the one who suggested I write Mr. Blessing and describe our problems, which I attempted to do. It is a curious thing that he would single out the noise issue in order to depreciate our concerns, while ignoring the suggestions and requests at the end of my letter.

Then there is the matter of landscaping. Obviously there is a sight problem, which I pointed out in my letter of April 21, 2009. I did not need Mr. Blessing to use an entire paragraph telling me what to do, much less attempting to reason with me as if I were a child. The sight problem includes my neighbor parking his cars in his driveway. Should I ask him to not use his driveway? His shrubs are a problem also. None of these pose a problem I cannot work around for the sake of maintaining a decent relationship with my neighbor. I can and will resolve the problems where my own landscaping is concerned, but that is not Mr. Blessing's business. Large truck traffic is the primary issue raised by my letters.

In my letter dated April 21, 2009, I made a few proposals for the city's consideration. The first was re-routing large truck traffic. Regardless of what Mr. Blessing may say, a few days ago between 4:00 and 4:30pm I counted fifteen large tractor-trailers, long-bed trucks, dump trucks, and concrete trucks passing in front of our home. That equates to one large truck every two minutes. Now I cannot tell from the study Mr. Blessing mentions how that relates to ten percent of something, but the volume of car and smaller truck traffic on Vine Street is considerable. This volume, however, really has nothing to do with our issue. Large trucks disturb the peace of our neighborhood, and some do not drive safely.

Then there is the matter of my "otherwise" requests. (a) Limiting large truck traffic between the hours of 7:00pm and 7:00am. (b) Posting and enforcing 25 mph speed limit on Vine Street, particularly for traffic coming down the hill. (c) Erecting a caution sign for a hidden driveway on the curve south of the traffic light.

It does not seem too much to ask that the city respond to these requests, even if it is not possible to re-route large truck traffic. However, I would appreciate a response to each request, including the reason why large truck traffic cannot be re-routed as suggested.

Please allow me to add that we would be grateful if the city were to treat us as citizens worthy of a reasonable response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eugene C. Buie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "B".

Eugene C. Buie, DMin. (Retired)

HARRISONBURG TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMMISSION

May 14, 2009

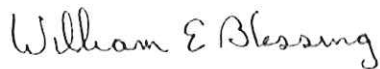
Rev. Dr. Eugene C. Buie, Jr.
790 Vine Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22802

Dear Rev. Buie:

Our Safety Commission exists to review and evaluate transportation safety issues in Harrisonburg and its immediate surroundings. When we believe there is an opportunity to resolve a safety concern in a positive way, we will make a recommendation to appropriate persons.

We have reviewed your letter and discussed your concerns at our last meeting. One of those concerns, loud trucks, is really not a safety issue and does not fall within the scope of our work. We have looked at the traffic volumes on Vine Street. A count taken several months ago showed less than 10 percent of the volume over a seven day period were trucks and most of those were not large trucks. As City Manager Hodgen pointed out to you, Vine Street was built to move truck traffic and even the relatively low percentage of trucks are allowed to use Vine Street and that, too, is not a safety issue, as long as all traffic, including trucks, operate safely. At this point, we have no evidence that that is not the case. We will continue to periodically look at this street, as we do with all streets in the city, to determine if safety issues have arisen.

We do agree with you that there is a sight distance problem at the curve where you live. Unfortunately, the problem is created by the bushes growing near the curb on the inside of the curve. We believe the sight distance can be improved considerably by cutting the bushes back. We cannot require that this be done, but we do recommend that you cut yours back and ask your neighbor to do the same in the interest of general public safety, as well as that of you and your neighbor. Should you agree to do this, we will then want to review with you how that may have helped (or not).



William E. Blessing, Chairman

cc: Kurt Hodgen, City Manager
James Baker, Public Works
Capt. Claytor, HPD

1180 Shenandoah St.
Harrisonburg, VA. 22802
June 1, '09

Safety Officer,
Harrisonburg Police Dept.

On the morning of March 5th, 2009, an accident occurred in Harrisonburg at the intersection of South High and Grace streets. As the pedestrian "WALK" signal flashed on, Dr. Pedro Aponte proceeded to walk across South High St. from west to east. As he did so, a car which was eastbound on Grace St. made a left turn into the northbound lane of South High, striking Dr. Aponte from behind. Police learned from the driver that she had a green light as she turned, but failed to see the pedestrian in the crosswalk until she struck him.

Dr. Aponte, a music professor at James Madison University and a personal friend, suffered an injury to his head. The car's windshield was shattered by the impact, as he was thrown over the hood.

We are concerned about the safety of this busy intersection, especially for pedestrians. Nearby Memorial Hall is now a part of the JMU campus, so foot traffic has increased considerably. There should be a complete stopping of all vehicular traffic when the pedestrian "WALK" signal is triggered.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely, *James Lehman*
Connie Lehman
James D. & Connie Lehman

Police Crash Report

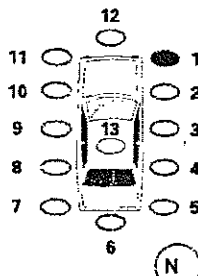
Revised Report ☐Page 4 of 4

CRASH

Crash Date 03/05/2009 MILITARY Time (24 hr clock) 0725 County of Crash ---City of ☐ Town of Harrisonburg CityLocal Case Number 2009-016096

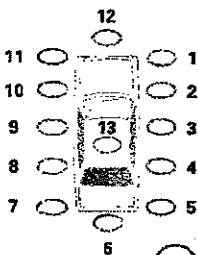
CRASH DIAGRAM

VEHICLE 1

Fill In Impact Area(s).
Initial Impact. ☐

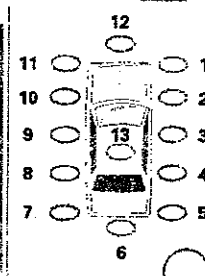
Veh Dir of Travel-N/S/E/W

VEHICLE 2

Fill In Impact Area(s).
Initial Impact. ☐

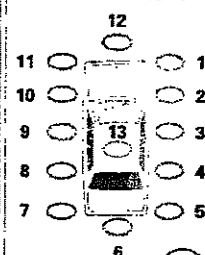
Veh Dir of Travel-N/S/E/W

VEHICLE 3

Fill In Impact Area(s).
Initial Impact. ☐

Veh Dir of Travel-N/S/E/W

VEHICLE 4

Fill In Impact Area(s).
Initial Impact. ☐

Veh Dir of Travel-N/S/E/W

DAMAGE TO PROPERTY OTHER THAN VEHICLES

Approx. Repair Cost	Object Struck (Tree, Fence, etc.)	Property Owners Name (Last, First, Middle)	Address (Street and Number)	VDOT Property
				<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

CRASH DESCRIPTION

VEHICLE 1 HAD A GREEN LIGHT AND WAS WAITING FOR TRAFFIC TO CLEAR SO SHE COULD MAKE A LEFT TURN ONTO S. HIGH ST FROM W. GRACE ST. THE PEDESTRIAN WAS CROSSING S. HIGH ST BECAUSE HE HAD A CROSS WALK SIGNAL. DRIVER 1 ADVISED ME SHE DIDN'T SEE THE PEDESTRIAN, BECAUSE THE SUN WAS IN HER EYES. DRIVER 1 WAS CHARGED WITH DRIVER INATTENTION.

CRASH EVENTS

Vehicle	First Event	Second Event	Third Event	Fourth Event	Most Harmful Event
1	19				19
Vehicle	First Event	Second Event	Third Event	Fourth Event	Most Harmful Event

First Harmful Event of Entire Crash that Results in First Injury or Damage.

19

COLLISION WITH FIXED OBJECT

1. Bank Or Lodge
2. Trees
3. Utility Pole
4. Fence Or Post
5. Guard Rail
6. Parked Vehicle
7. Tunnel, Bridge, Underpass, Culvert, etc.
8. Sign, Traffic Signal
9. Impact Cushioning Device
10. Other
11. Jersey Wall
12. Building/Structure
13. Curb
14. Ditch
15. Other Fixed Object
16. Other Traffic Barrier
17. Traffic Sign Support
18. Mailbox

COLLISION WITH PERSON, MOTOR VEHICLE OR NON-FIXED OBJECT

19. Pedestrian
20. Motor Vehicle In Transport
21. Train
22. Bicycle
23. Animal
24. Work Zone
25. Maintenance Equipment
26. Other Movable Object
27. Unknown Movable Object
28. Other

NON-COLLISION

28. Ran Off Road
29. Jack Knife
30. Overtake (Rollover)
31. Downhill Runaway
32. Cargo Loss or Shift
33. Explosion or Fire
34. Separation of Units
35. Cross Median
36. Cross Centerline
37. Equipment Failure (Tire, etc)
38. Immersion
39. Fell/Jumped From Vehicle
40. Thrown or Falling Object
41. Non-Collision Unknown
42. Other Non-Collision